

***Lepidium oxycarpum* T. & G.**  
sharpfruited peppergrass  
Brassicaceae (Mustard Family)

**Status:** State Threatened

**Rank:** G4S1

**General Description:** Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1984): A slender, erect to spreading annual that is 2 to 7¾ in. (5 to 20 cm) tall and minutely pubescent, at least in the inflorescence. The basal leaves are ¾ to 2¼ in. (2 to 6 cm) long and pinnately cleft or divided into linear segments. The stem leaves are mostly linear, entire and lack earlike lobes at the base of various leaves and petals. The racemes are open and elongate. The pedicels are distinctly flattened, spreading to somewhat reflexed, often sigmoid, and usually slightly longer than the fruits. The sepals are about 1/64 in. (½ mm) long. The petals are usually reduced or wanting, but as much as 1/64 in. (½ mm) long, and white. There are usually 4 stamens. The silicles are ovate, 1/8 in. (2½ to 3½ mm) long, 1/16 to 1/8 in. (2 to 2½ mm) broad, hairless, finely but plainly reticulate, with deeply emarginate tips, and two strongly divergent lobes that are not quite 1/32 in. (1 mm) long. The style is lacking.

**Identification Tips:** *Lepidium oxycarpum* is most closely related to *L. dictyotum*. These two species can be distinguished by their pedicels and silicles. The pedicels of *L. oxycarpum* are usually longer than the fruits and about twice as broad as thick. Its hairless silicles are 1/8 in. (2½ to 3½ mm) long and have an apex that has widely divergent lobes, which are nearly 1/32 in. (1 mm) long. The pedicels of *L. dictyotum* are usually shorter than the fruits and over twice as broad as thick. Its silicles are 1/8 to ¼ in. (3¼ to 4½ mm) long, often pubescent, and have an apex that has a narrow sinus or, if open, the divergent lobes are usually over 1/32 in. (1 mm) long.

**Phenology:** Identifiable March through May.

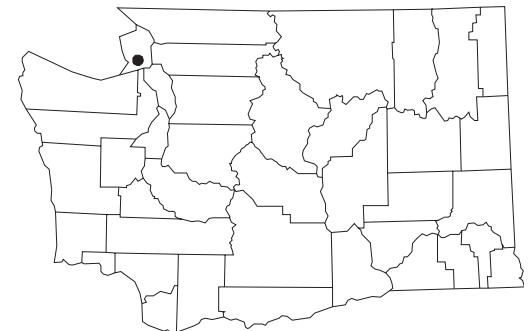
**Range:** This species is chiefly found in south central California, but it has also been found in Victoria, British Columbia and Washington.

***Lepidium oxycarpum***  
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Known distribution of  
*Lepidium oxycarpum*  
in Washington



● Current (1980+)  
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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Photo by Oregon State University

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**Habitat:** *Lepidium oxycarpum* commonly grows in the salt spray zone. In Washington, this species has been found in moist cracks and vernal pools on bedrock and in sand or dark saline soil in full sun. Associated species include prairie plantain (*Plantago elongata*), toad rush (*Juncus bufonius*), yellow hairgrass (*Aira praecox*), silver hairgrass (*Aira caryophyllea*), stickystem pearlwort (*Sagina crassicaulis*), armeria (*Armeria* sp.), poverty brome (*Bromus sterilis*), and soft brome (*Bromus mollis*).

**Ecology:** This species occurs in moist areas within the saltwater spray zone in direct sunlight.

**State Status Comments:** The species is known from one recent occurrence in San Juan County. This population is found on privately owned land.

**Inventory Needs:** Moist areas within the saltwater spray zone in San Juan County should be systematically surveyed for additional populations.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Definite threats have not been identified for this species. However, the small range of this taxon in Washington and the small number of known occurrences are major concerns. Any disturbance to the immediate habitat, such as grazing, development, and recreational activities, may constitute a threat.

**References:**

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1964. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 2: Salicaceae to Saxifragaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 597 pp.